

## CLAIMS

1        1. A rating information publishing system comprising  
2        a rating browser device, a rating target device and a rating  
3        performer device, which are interconnected via a network;  
4        said rating performer device comprising;  
5        a unit for generating rating marks for rating targets;  
6        a rating mark database for managing the generated  
7        rating marks;  
8        a unit for receiving a rating mark acquisition request  
9        from said rating target device; and  
10       a unit for sending a corresponding rating mark to said  
11       rating target device in response to said acquisition  
12       request;  
13       said rating target device comprising;  
14       a unit for sending a rating mark acquisition request  
15       to said rating performer device;  
16       a unit for receiving a rating mark from said rating  
17       performer device;  
18       a Web page database for holding Web pages to which said  
19       rating mark is attached, said Web pages being accessible  
20       from said rating browser device;  
21       a unit for receiving an acquisition request for one

22 of said rating-mark-attached Web pages from said rating  
23 browser device; and

24 a unit for sending said rating-mark-attached Web page  
25 to said rating browser device by referencing to said Web  
26 page database in response to said acquisition request; and

27 said rating browser device comprising;

28 a unit for sending an acquisition request for a  
29 rating-mark-attached Web page to said rating target device;

30 a unit for receiving said rating-mark-attached Web  
31 page from said rating target device;

32 a unit for verifying the validity of the rating mark  
33 included in said rating-mark-attached Web page; and

34 a unit for displaying said rating-mark-attached Web  
35 page and the verification result.

1 2. A rating information publishing system according  
2 to claim 1 wherein;

3 said rating performer device further comprises;

4 a unit for modifying the status information associated  
5 with the respective rating marks being managed by said  
6 rating mark database;

7 a unit for receiving a rating mark verification  
8 request from said rating browser device; and

9 a unit for verifying the validity of a corresponding  
10 rating mark by referencing said rating mark database in

11 response to said rating mark verification request, and  
12 sending the result to said rating browser device; and  
13 said rating browser device further comprises;  
14 a unit for sending a rating mark validity verification  
15 request to said rating performer device; and  
16 a unit for receiving the result of said verification  
17 request from said rating performer device.

1 3. A rating information publishing system comprising  
2 a rating browser device, a rating target device, and a rating  
3 performer device that are interconnected via a network;  
4 said rating performer device comprising;  
5 a rating mark database for managing rating marks;  
6 a unit for receiving a rating mark verification  
7 request from said rating browser device; and  
8 a unit for verifying the validity of a corresponding  
9 rating mark by referencing said rating mark database in  
10 response to said verification request, and sending the  
11 result to said rating browser device;  
12 said rating target device comprising;  
13 a Web page database for holding Web pages to which said  
14 rating mark is attached, said Web pages being accessible  
15 from said rating browser device;  
16 a unit for receiving an acquisition request for one  
17 of said rating-mark-attached Web pages from said rating

18 browser device; and

19 a unit for sending said rating-mark-attached Web page  
20 to said rating browser device by referencing said Web page  
21 database in response to said acquisition request; and

22 said rating browser device comprising;

23 a unit for sending an acquisition request for a  
24 rating-mark-attached Web page to said rating target device;

25 a unit for receiving said rating-mark-attached Web  
26 page from said rating target device;

27 a unit for verifying the validity of the rating mark  
28 included in said rating-mark-attached Web page;

29 a unit for sending a rating mark validity verification  
30 request to said rating performer device;

31 a unit for receiving the result of said verification  
32 request from said rating performer device; and

33 a unit for displaying said rating-mark-attached Web  
34 page and the verification result.

1 4. A rating information publishing system according  
2 to claim 3 wherein;

3 said rating performer device further comprises;

4 a unit for receiving a rating mark acquisition request  
5 from said rating target device;

6 a unit for generating a rating mark for a rating target  
7 based on said acquisition request;

8           a unit for registering said generated rating mark to  
9   said rating mark database; and  
10          a unit for sending said generated rating mark to said  
11   rating target device which has sent said acquisition  
12   request; and  
13          said rating target device further comprises;  
14          a unit for sending a rating mark acquisition request  
15   to said rating performer device; and  
16          a unit for receiving a rating mark from said rating  
17   performer device.

1           5. A rating information publishing system according  
2   to claim 1 wherein;

3           said rating performer device further comprises a unit  
4   for notifying to said rating target device that said rating  
5   target may obtain a rating mark; and

6           said rating target device further comprises a unit for  
7   receiving said notification from said rating performer  
8   device.

1           6. A rating information publishing system according  
2   to claim 1 wherein       said rating mark database holds  
3   detailed information associated with the rating target; and

4           said rating performer device further comprises ;  
5           a unit for receiving an acquisition request of said

6 detailed information from said rating browser device; and  
7 a unit for sending the corresponding detailed  
8 information to said rating browser device by referencing  
9 said rating mark database in response to said detailed  
10 information acquisition request; and

11 said rating browser device further comprises;  
12 a unit for sending an acquisition request for detailed  
13 information on a rating target to said rating performer  
14 device; and  
15 a unit for receiving said detailed information from  
16 said rating performer device.

1 7. A rating information publishing system according  
2 to claim 1 wherein said unit for verification utilizes a  
3 digital signature technology and a digital watermark  
4 technology.

1 8. A method for disclosing rating information wherein;  
2 a rating performer generates a rating mark indicative  
3 of the assessment on a rating target based on the result  
4 of review conducted over said rating target, and sends the  
5 rating mark to said rating target;

6 a rating target publishes a Web page to which said  
7 obtained rating mark is attached; and

8 a rating browser obtains said rating-mark-attached

9 Web page, and verifies the validity of said rating mark by  
10 using a rating mark validity verification unit.

1 9. A method for disclosing rating information  
2 according to claim 8 wherein;

3 said rating performer manages state information of  
4 rating marks it has generated in a manner that, when an  
5 assessment of a rating target has to be changed after a rating  
6 mark is sent to said rating target, the rating mark is  
7 invalidated by modifying said status information;

8 said rating browser requests to said rating performer  
9 to verify the validity of the rating mark included in a  
10 rating-mark-attached Web page published by said rating  
11 target; and

12 said rating performer references the status  
13 information associated with said rating mark in response  
14 to the rating mark validity verification request from said  
15 rating browser, and notifies the validity or invalidity of  
16 the rating mark to said rating browser.

1 10. A method for disclosing rating information  
2 according to claim 8 wherein;

3 said rating performer manages detailed information of  
4 rating targets;

5 said rating browser requests said rating performer to

6 provide the detailed information on one of said rating  
7 targets; and

8       said rating performer sends said detailed information  
9 to said rating browser in response to the request for  
10 provision of the detailed information of the rating target  
11 from said rating browser.

1       11. A method for disclosing rating information  
2 according to claim 8 wherein said validity verification unit  
3 utilizes a digital signature technology and a digital  
4 watermark technology.

1       12. A method for disclosing rating information  
2 according to claim 8 wherein said validity verification unit  
3 utilizes a hyperlink technology of a WWW system.

1       13. A rating browser device comprising;  
2       a unit for requesting a Web page acquisition to a  
3 rating target device;  
4       a unit for analyzing and displaying the obtained Web  
5 page; and  
6       a rating mark verification unit for performing  
7 verification of a rating mark when the obtained Web page  
8 contains the rating mark.



1 14. A rating browser device according to claim 13  
2 wherein said rating mark verification unit confirms the  
3 validity based on the information contained in said rating  
4 mark and the information associated with said obtained Web  
5 page.

1 15. A rating browser device according to claim 14  
2 wherein said rating mark verification unit further requests  
3 the validity verification of said rating mark to a rating  
4 performer device which manages said rating mark, and  
5 confirms the validity of said rating mark based on the  
6 verification result returned from said rating performer  
7 device.

1 16. A rating performer device comprising;  
2 a rating mark database for managing rating marks;  
3 a unit for receiving a rating mark validity  
4 verification request;  
5 a status determination unit for determining a status  
6 of a corresponding rating mark by conducting a search over  
7 said rating mark database in response to said verification  
8 request; and  
9 a unit for sending said determination result to the  
10 requestor.

1        17. A rating performer device according to claim 16  
2 further comprising a rating mark issuance unit for  
3 generating a rating mark based on information associated  
4 with a Web page to which said rating mark is attached and  
5 an image data representing a corresponding rating in  
6 response to a rating mark acquisition request.

1        18. A storage medium storing a rating mark  
2 verification program to be executed by a rating browser  
3 device, said rating mark verification program being  
4 designed to execute;

5        a step, when a Web page obtained by said rating browser  
6 device contains a rating mark, of performing a validity  
7 verification of the rating mark based on the information  
8 contained within said rating mark and information  
9 associated with said Web page;

10       a step of requesting a validity verification of said  
11 rating mark to a rating performer device which manages said  
12 rating mark; and

13       a step of confirming the validity of said rating mark  
14 based on the verification result returned from said rating  
15 performer device.